

**image**

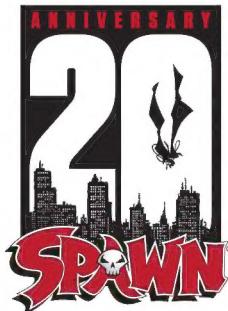
**THE INCREDULOUS**

# **SHAGGY**

DIGITAL  
EDITION  
**226**  
JAN

APPROVED  
BY THE  
IMAGE COMICS  
AUTHORITY





TODD McFARLANE  
WRITER/PLOT

SZYMON KUDRANSKI  
ART

FCO PLASCENCIA  
COLOR

TOM ORZECHOWSKI  
LETTERING

JON GOFF  
PLOT

TODD McFARLANE  
PARODY COVER ARTIST

TODD McFARLANE  
EDITOR

#### PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Jim and Richard explore the abandoned military complex that once housed Project: RAGNOROK in search of closure and the final puzzle piece that just may allow Jim to put his past behind him.

Searching the rundown streets and compounds of "Simmons," Jim comes to grips with the man he was, and the horrors he inflicted on countless "patients" – all in a mad quest for knowledge beyond his understanding.

Meanwhile, Richard's true allegiance is revealed as Jason Wynn returns. The ultimate puppet master, and Jim's one-time colleague has a few final secrets to spill...Secrets that span decades, if not centuries, and stretch to the highest office on Earth – the President of the United States of America.



**Jim Downing (Spawn)** – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the *Spawn* mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn... and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



**Director Kramer** – Before Jim Downing woke from his coma in *Spawn* #185 he lead a completely different life – was a completely different man, with a different name, different physical appearance and quite possibly sinister motivations driven by unchecked ambition. Director Kramer ran the clandestine government program, RAGNOROK and, unknowingly had a hand in crafting some of the darker aspects of the *Spawn* universe.



**The Program** – A clandestine military operation with deep-rooted ties to events from throughout *Spawn*'s 20-year existence. Hidden within the secrets of The Program, also known as Project: RAGNOROK, lies the truth Jim seeks, and the dark heart of a past better left buried.



**Richard Masullo (Tremor)** – Transformed into the hulking monster known as Tremor by the same clandestine government program that Jim Downing once oversaw, Richard is a man on a mission, crossing the country to confront Jim about their shared past – but is he friend or foe?



**Jason Wynn** – At one time considered to be among the most powerful men on the planet, Jason Wynn ran a number of covert government programs with far-reaching influence, before his shocking and sudden fall from grace. Wynn's connection to the events surrounding Jim Downing's "rebirth" further cement his role as a master manipulator.



**"Simmonsville"** – A defunct military facility that at one time served as the base of operations for Project: RAGNOROK, under the direction of Director Kramer and Jason Wynn. Years after the Program's cancellation, the base's purpose shifted to a testing ground for the research and manipulation of necroplasm in a joint venture between the U.S. military and agents of Hell – an underground operation, once more, lead by Jason Wynn and named after a fallen soldier by the name of Al Simmons.

Managing Editor  
JEN CASSIDY

Art Director  
BEN TIMMRECK

Publisher For Image Comics  
ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY  
TODD McFARLANE

**image**   
**TODD McFARLANE**  
PRODUCTIONS  
**SPAWN.COM**

LIVE  
Chicago



AMERICA.  
I BELIEVE WE CAN  
KEEP THE PROMISE OF  
OUR FOUNDING... THE IDEA  
THAT IF YOU'RE WILLING TO  
WORK HARD, IT DOESN'T  
MATTER WHO YOU ARE... OR  
WHERE YOU COME FROM...  
OR WHAT YOU LOOK  
LIKE, OR WHERE  
YOU LOVE.



IT DOESN'T  
MATTER IF YOU'RE  
BLACK OR WHITE, OR  
HISPANIC, OR ASIAN, OR  
NATIVE AMERICAN-- OR  
YOUNG OR OLD, OR RICH  
OR POOR... ABLED, DISABLED,  
GAY OR STRAIGHT, YOU CAN  
MAKE IT HERE IN AMERICA  
IF YOU'RE WILLING  
TO TRY!

BREAKING NEWS



I REMEMBER  
BEING THAT NAÏVE  
ONCE. THINKING  
I CONTROLLED MY  
OWN DESTINY.  
BUT...

23 Years Ago.

"...I WAS YOUNG.  
DIDN'T KNOW BETTER.  
FORTUNATELY IT  
DIDN'T LAST LONG."

I'LL BE DOING  
MOST OF THE BRIEFING  
DURING THIS SESSION--  
THOUGH YOU'RE WELCOME TO  
ADD ANY DETAIL SPECIFICS  
I MIGHT MISS.

YES,  
COMMANDER.

AS YOU KNOW, YOUR  
RECENT SECURITY UPGRADE BY  
THE COMMISSION MEANS WE BELIEVE  
YOU'RE READY FOR INCLUSION TO OUR  
ONGOING '**CLANDESTINE MEETINGS**'. YOU  
SHOULD BE QUITE PROUD OF YOURSELF,  
AGENT WYNN... VERY FEW EVER  
MAKE IT THIS FAR.

DO YOU  
HAVE YOUR  
REPORTS IN  
ORDER?

I DO. THEY  
INCLUDE ALL  
THE FINANCIAL  
DATA YOU  
REQUESTED...

...AS WELL  
AS PRELIMINARY  
INSIGHT FOR A  
POTENTIAL GERMAN  
FACILITY.

EXCELLENT.

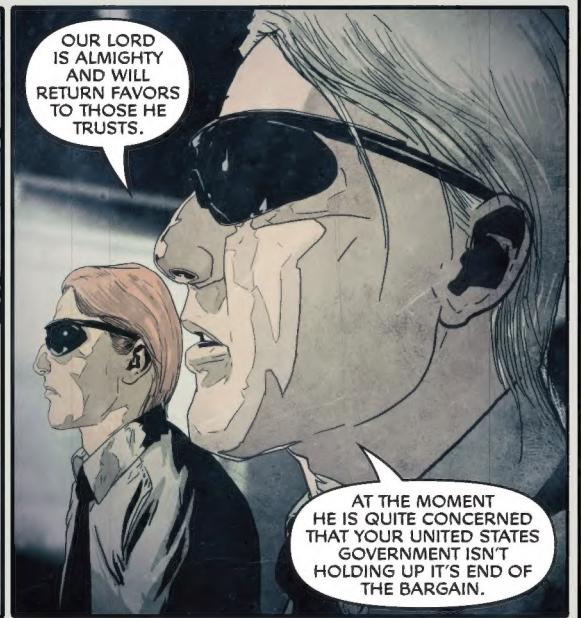
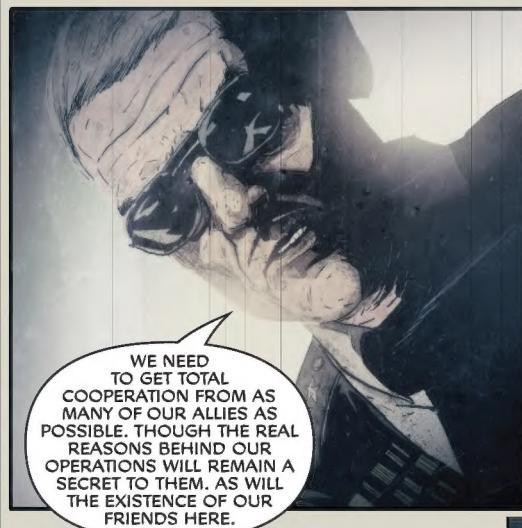
ESPECIALLY  
SINCE SO MANY  
NATIONS HAVE BEGUN  
CUTTING THEIR MILITARY  
SPENDING BECAUSE OF CURRENT  
ECONOMIC CONCERNs. THAT  
GLOBAL REDUCTION HAS PUT  
EVEN GREATER PRESSURE ON THE  
U.S. TO INTERVENE FURTHER  
INTO THE UNREST FROM  
THE MIDDLE EAST.

GORBACHEV  
AND THE SOVIETS  
ARE ON THE BRINK  
OF COLLAPSE, MEAN-  
ING THEY'LL BE  
MORE DESPERATE  
THAN EVER.

THAT'S WHY THIS  
MEETING IS IMPORTANT.  
THESE 'AGENTS' KNOW  
AMERICA IS THEIR BEST  
CHANCE TO FURTHER THEIR  
AGENDA, AND WHY WE HAVE  
TO CONTINUE ENCOURAGING  
THEM TO SIGN THE FINAL  
DRAFT TO OUR LATEST  
OFFER.

WE TAKE  
OUR NEED TO  
BE 'THE' CONDUIT  
FOR HEAVEN'S  
EARTHLY DUTIES  
VERY SERIOUSLY.





I MUST RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE. THE BOLIVIAN FORCES HAVE JOINED IN WITH THE AFGHAN REBELS TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF YOUR SACRED 'DEAD ZONES' ARE PROPERLY FORTIFIED.

THOUGH NONE OF THEM ARE EVEN AWARE THEY'RE PROTECTING SOME OF HEAVEN'S PORTALS. OUR COMPLICATION IS THAT THE DESIGNATION OF WHERE YOUR GOD PUT THOSE 'DEAD ZONES' MIGHT HAVE MADE SENSE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO BUT...



BUT!... ON TODAY'S GEO-POLITICAL MAP IT MEANS WE'RE INFRINGING ON TERRITORIES WE HAVE NO LEGAL BUSINESS BEING IN! SO, IT ISN'T OUR POLICIES THAT ARE SLOWING DOWN THIS PROCESS. WE'VE DONE EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO SHIFT BLAME ON THE SOVIETS. AND SO FAR THAT'S ALL THE WORLD BELIEVES THIS IS-- JUST MORE CIVIL UNREST BETWEEN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES!



THOSE ARE STRONG WORDS, AGENT WYNN.

MY APOLOGIES, I MEANT NO DISRESPECT. I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE WE'RE ALL DEALING WITH THE CURRENT REALITIES OF THIS WORLD.

SO ARE WE.

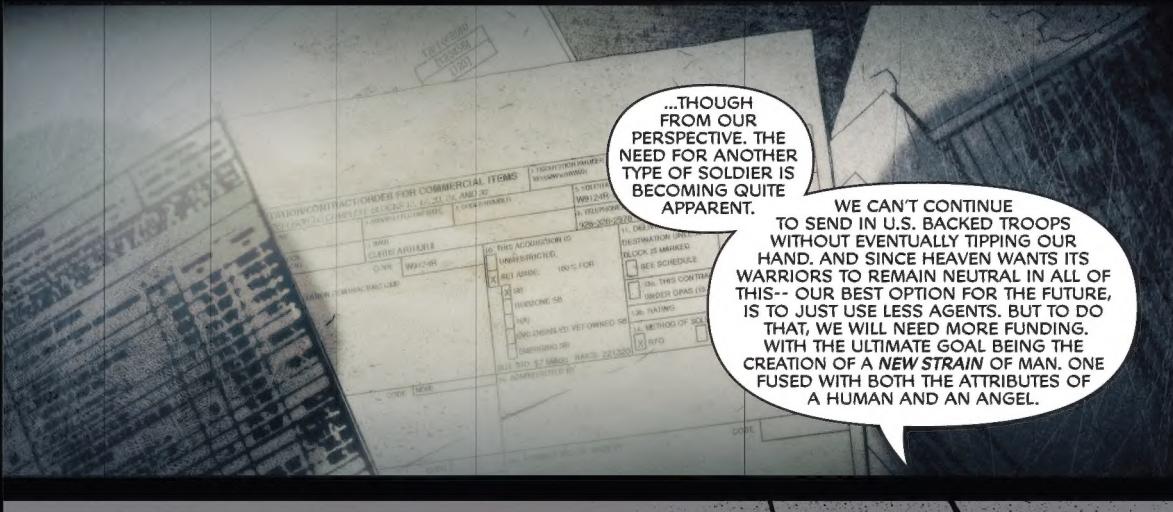
THAT IS WHY WE HAVE BEEN CHANNELING MONIES TO THE PROPER INDIVIDUALS SO THEY CAN INVEST INTO YOUR OPERATIONS UNDETECTED.

WHICH HAS BEEN WORING...



...THOUGH FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, THE NEED FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF SOLDIER IS BECOMING QUITE APPARENT.

WE CAN'T CONTINUE TO SEND IN U.S. BACKED TROOPS WITHOUT EVENTUALLY TIPPING OUR HAND. AND SINCE HEAVEN WANTS ITS WARRIOR'S TO REMAIN NEUTRAL IN ALL OF THIS-- OUR BEST OPTION FOR THE FUTURE, IS TO JUST USE LESS AGENTS. BUT TO DO THAT, WE WILL NEED MORE FUNDING, WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL BEING THE CREATION OF A NEW STRAIN OF MAN. ONE FUSED WITH BOTH THE ATTRIBUTES OF A HUMAN AND AN ANGEL.





BECAUSE AS YOU KNOW... PROTECTING OUR 'DEAD ZONES' IS THE FRONT HALF OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. THE SECOND-- AND PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT PIECE IS FINDING THE LOCATION OF HELL'S 'DEAD ZONES'.

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN PRESSING THAT FOR QUITE SOME TIME...

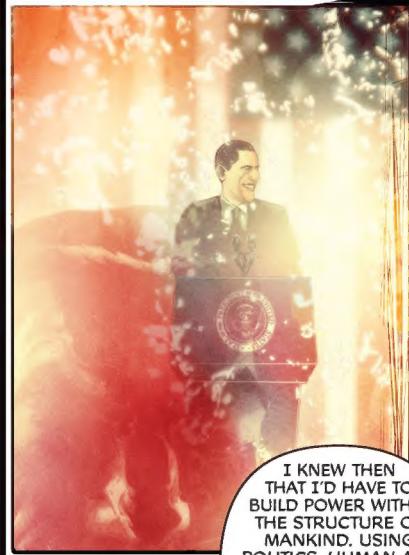
...SINCE THEIR CREATION THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO.



THAT ISN'T ENOUGH. THE CONSTANT EVIL ON YOUR WORLD IS 'LEAKING' FROM PLACES WE ARE YET AWARE OF.



Now.



THAT WAS THE MOMENT I FIRST BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND. HEAVEN WAS TRUSTING HELL TO BEHAVE AND VICE VERSA? THINK OF THAT ABSURDITY.

I KNEW THEN THAT I'D HAVE TO BUILD POWER WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF MANKIND. USING POLITICS. HUMAN AID. WEAPON EXCHANGES. WHATEVER IT TOOK TO ASSURE THAT WE WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT ON THE SHORT END OF ANY MISSTEP BY HEAVEN.

BECAUSE I QUICKLY FOUND OUT HEAVEN WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN CONTROLLING AND CORRUPTING THE SOULS OF MEN. PERHAPS MORE THAN HELL. THEY'RE JUST BETTER AT DISGUISE IT BECAUSE THEY KNEW MANKIND HAD BEGUN BUILDING ENTIRE ORGANIZATIONS AROUND RELIGION.

AND WHEN HUMANS DECIDED TO PICK HEAVEN AS THE GOOD GUYS IN THEIR WRITINGS, GOD AND HIS ANGELS HAD TO KEEP UP THE APPEARANCE THEY WERE THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF HELL-- ITS REALLY BEEN THE GREATEST CON PERPETRATED UPON MANKIND.



I'M GETTING THERE-- BECAUSE THE PART OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS THAT GRABBED MY ATTENTION THE MOST... WAS THE IDEA, OF A 'HYBRID' SOLDIER!

AND THAT--MY DEAR FRIEND, KRAMER-- IS HOW WE FIRST MET.



19 Years Ago.



THE CONSTANT STRIFE IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD CONTINUES TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE. SINCE SPLITTING INTO A NUMBER OF SMALLER COUNTRIES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNING BODIES, EXPERTS STILL BELIEVE COMPETING COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE TRIPPING OVER EACH OTHER IN THE PURSUIT OF CAPTURING SOME OF THE POWER INFLUENCE IN THOSE SURROUNDING AREAS.

COMPLICATING MATTERS EVEN FURTHER IS THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO BEGIN WITHDRAWING SOME OF ITS WEAPONS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FROM SOME OF OUR MOST TRUSTED ALLIES. THOSE MOVES, WHICH THE WHITE HOUSE ATTRIBUTES TO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS, HAS ONLY ESCALATED THE TURMOIL WITHIN SOME COUNTRIES.



RECENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS INDICATE THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE THE SOVIET COLLAPSE DRIVING MOST OF THE ACTIONS NEAR THE SYRIAN BORDERS. INSTEAD OUR JOURNALISTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT MORE THAN ONE MILITARY FACTION, WHICH WAS VERY LOYAL TO AMERICA'S CAUSES, HAS NOW ABANDONED THEIR COALITION WITH THE U.S. ARMY. SOURCES SAY THAT CONSTANT DISAGREEMENTS OVER WHERE MANY OF THE WATCH POSTS WERE BEING POSITIONED CONTRIBUTED TO THE BREAK UP.

ACCORDING TO ONE HIGH RANKING OFFICIAL FROM THAT REGION, THE STATIONS BEING BUILT ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE IN SOME CASES. AND IN A DIRECT QUOTE HE SAID, *"THE U.S. APPEARS TO BE PROTECTING NOTHING! THEY HAVE SECURED RINGS AROUND VARIOUS AREAS WHERE NO PEOPLE RESIDE AND NO TRANSPORT LINES EXIST."*

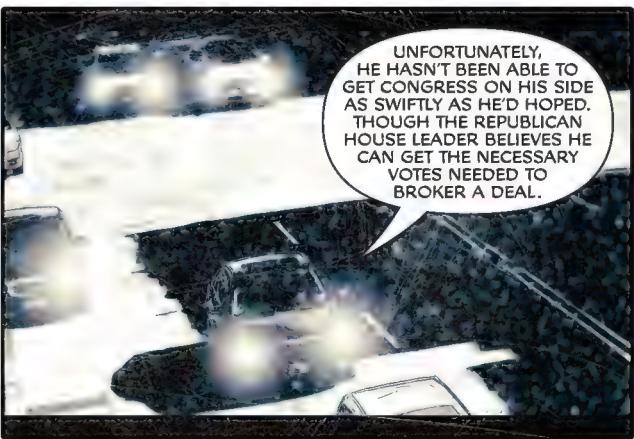


I'M TELLING YOU FOLKS... **DON'T BUY IT!**

*NOT FOR A SECOND!... EXPERTS ARE TRYING TO USE THE RUSSIANS AS A CONVENIENT SCAPEGOAT FOR FAILED U.S. MILITARY INCOMPETENCE! IF I WAS A MUSLIM FAITHFUL, I'D BE TICKED OFF TOO! FIRST AMERICANS GET THEM TO START A FIGHT AGAINST THE SOVIETS BY LOADING THEM DOWN WITH HEAVY ARTILLIERY... THEN WE PULL THOSE SUPPLIES WHILE STILL ASKING THEM TO ASSIST US IN SETTING UP CAMPS DESIGNED TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM AREAS WHERE PEOPLE HAVE NEVER WANTED TO GO IN THE FIRST PLACE!*

**GIMME A BREAK!!**

NOW WE HAVE COUNTRIES CHANGING SIDES FROM WEEK-TO-WEEK BECAUSE NO ONE OVER THERE HAS A CLUE ON WHO TO TRUST! *CAN YOU IMAGINE THE COMPLETE MISSTEPS ON OUR SIDE WHEN OUR ALLIES ARE WONDERING IF SIDING WITH THE FORMER SOVIETS IS THE ROUTE TO GO?!! THANK GOD THE FUNDING IS DRYING UP FOR THESE INSANE MISSIONS US TAX PAYERS ARE SPONSORING!*





SINCE  
MOST OF THOSE IN  
WASHINGTON ARE ONLY  
CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN  
RE-ELECTION WE CAN QUICKLY  
SET UP A SYSTEM THAT'LL GET THEM  
TO CONSTANTLY VOTE IN  
OUR DIRECTION.

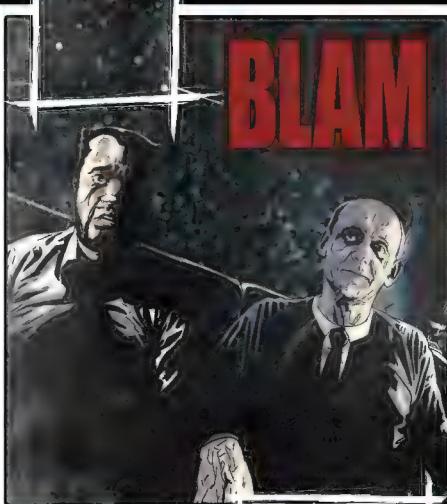




UMBRAS  
ADSIDUE  
MOVERIS.  
CAVETE!)

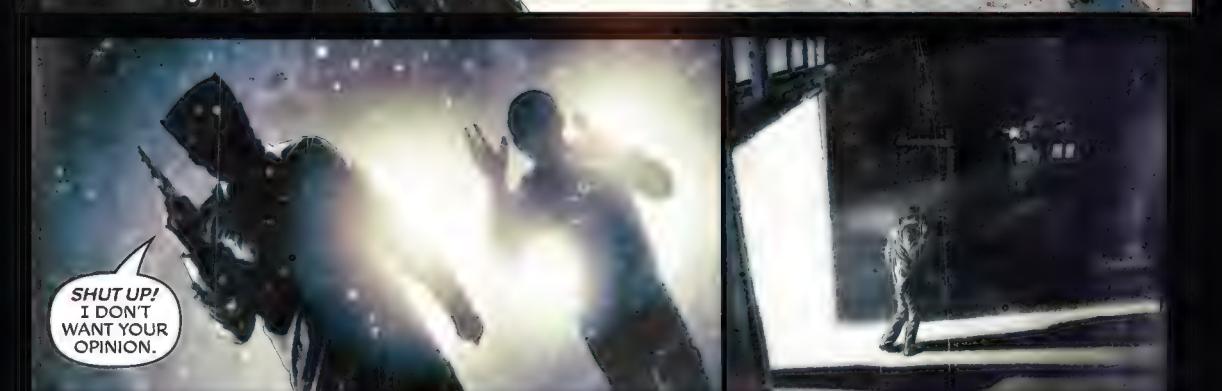


**BLAM**





...IF IT IS A  
TRAP-- THEY  
ALREADY  
KNOW WE'RE  
HERE.



LET'S GO  
INSIDE.

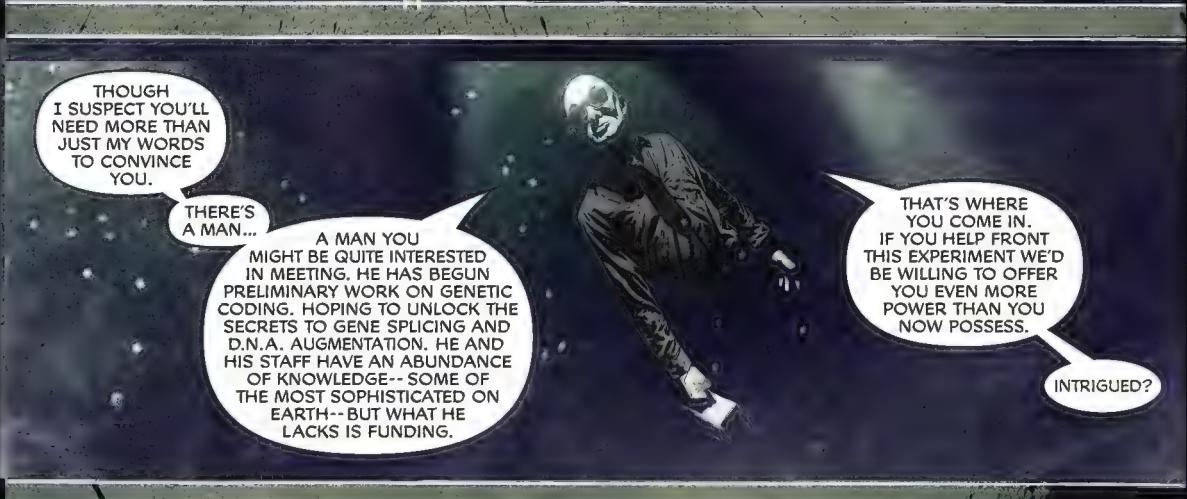
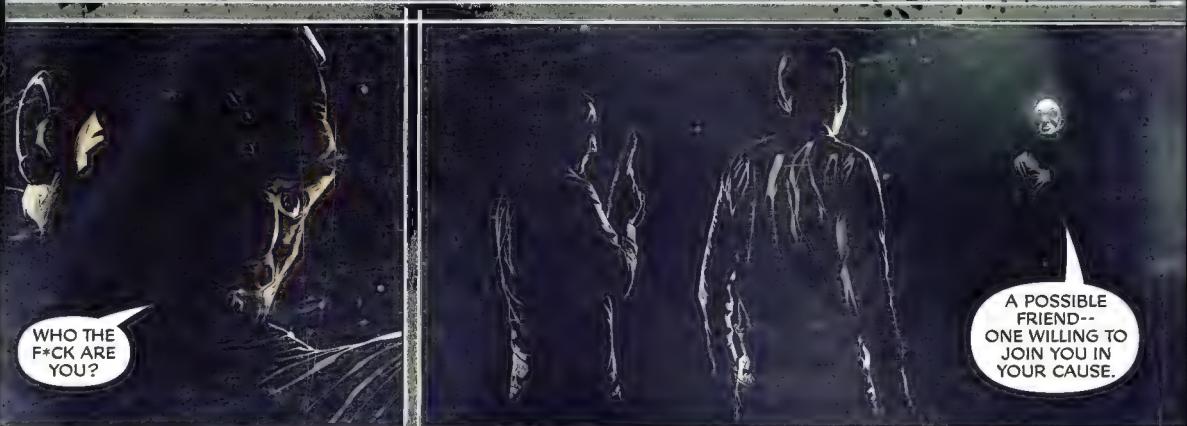
BUT,  
SIR...?



SHUT UP!  
I DON'T  
WANT YOUR  
OPINION.



GLAD YOU  
COULD MAKE IT,  
MR. WYNNE. WE  
HAVE MUCH TO  
TALK ABOUT.



BAM  
BAM  
BAM  
BAM

COME NOW,  
MR. WYNN, DON'T  
LOOK SO SURPRISED.  
SURELY YOU CAN'T BE  
SO NAÏVE AS TO NOT  
BE PREPARED FOR  
MOMENTS LIKE  
THIS.

THIS CASE  
I'M HOLDING  
CONTAINS ALL THE  
INFORMATION  
YOU'LL NEED.

SIR, WE  
NEED TO  
LEAVE!

YOU, ON THE  
OTHER HAND,  
MR. WYNN, WERE  
NEVER FULLY ON  
HEAVEN'S SIDE TO  
BEGIN WITH.

BUT I'M UNDER  
STRICT ORDERS TO  
DELIVER THIS 'GIFT' TO YOU  
ONLY. BECAUSE MR. HAGGERTY  
HAS BECOME CORRUPTED--  
WILLING TO JUMP SIDES WITH-  
OUT BEING BRIBED. HIS TYPE  
CAN'T BE TRUSTED.

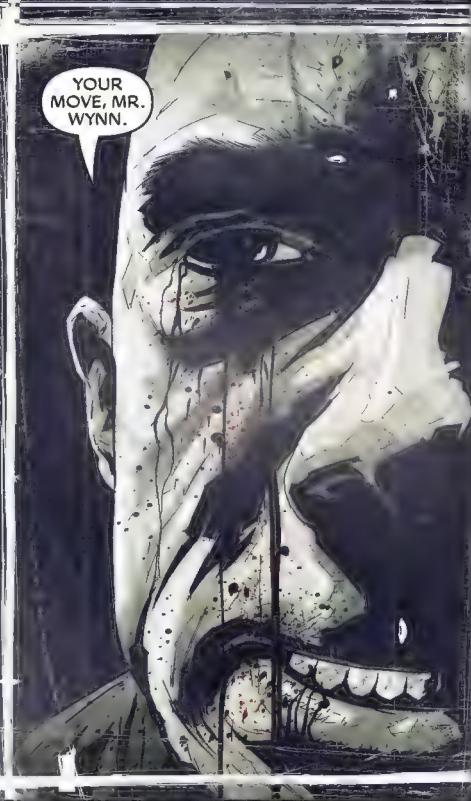
THIS IS  
BULLSHIT!  
DON'T LISTEN  
TO HIM,  
JASON!



SO THIS ISN'T  
ABOUT WHAT WE  
WANT OR WHAT THEY  
WANT. IT IS SIMPLY A  
MATTER OF WHAT  
YOU WANT.



JASON!  
LET'S GO!  
NOW!... BEFORE  
HE SPEWS  
MORE LIES TO  
YOU.





THAT WAS IT. THAT WAS HOW I CAME TO BE YOUR PARTNER. BECAUSE LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD--YOUR 'PROJECT' COULD SERVE A GREATER MISSION. SO I NEEDED TO USE WHAT YOU HAD.

AND ALONG THE WAY I BUILT A SECRET EMPIRE THAT GRADUALLY ASSERTED ITS INFLUENCE IN ALMOST ALL ASPECTS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT. FROM LOCAL MAYORS ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP. WE EVEN HAD A HAND IN THE SELECTION OF SOME KEY UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT APPOINTEES, SO THAT WHEN THE CASE OF "CITIZENS UNITED" CAME BEFORE THEM, WE ALREADY KNEW THEY'D VOTE TO ALLOW UNLIMITED FUNDS TO BE DONATED ANONYMOUSLY.

THAT MADE MY JOB EVEN EASIER.

FROM THERE IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF LETTING YOU AND YOUR COMPANY THINK YOU WERE THE ONES STEERING THE AGENDAS. WHEN IT WAS REALLY THE OPPOSITE. NEAR THE END I HAD MOST OF THE SCIENCE I WANTED BUT YOU STILL NEEDED MY MONEY.

THAT'S WHY YOUR COMPANY BECAME SO INDEBTED TO US.

BULLSHIT!

THEN WHY SHUT IT DOWN? THAT WAS YOUR CALL, NOT MINE!

I HAD NO CHOICE!

NOT AFTER I FOUND OUT YOU HAD SOME WEIRD CONNECTION WITH MY GREATEST SUCCESS. A LINK YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT! YOU HAD TO BE STOPPED!!

AND I  
THOUGHT  
I DID.

BUT HERE  
WE ARE.  
OBVIOUSLY,  
I DIDN'T DO  
MY JOB.



SO I  
WANT  
WHAT'S  
MINE.

I CREATED  
SPAWN... NOT YOU!  
I HELPED BRING HIS  
POWERS TO EARTH, BUT  
NOW YOU'VE STOLEN  
THEM FROM ME. I'M  
ABOUT TO STEAL  
THEM BACK.

YOU'RE  
MAD.



PERHAPS.



THOUGH  
IN THE END  
I'LL GET THEM  
BOTH.



YOU SEE... THAT  
COSTUME YOU'RE  
WEARING-- YOU'RE  
GOING TO GIVE  
IT TO ME.  
THEN MORE  
IMPORTANTLY...



...YOU'RE  
GOING TO BRING  
**AL SIMMONS**  
BACK!



NEXT ISSUE:  
**DEATH IS IN THE AIR**





EMPIRE